

*Ithaca, NY* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that Tompkins County has been awarded \$2.175 million in federal economic recovery money to purchase six new, modern 40 foot buses that will meet the new 2010 emission standards for diesel buses. The county will lease the buses to TCAT (Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit). The funds come from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which Hinchey actively supported and voted for in Congress last year.

"This economic recovery funding will take six very outdated buses off the roads of Tompkins County and replace them with modern, efficient buses that will serve local residents well," Hinchey said. "This federal economic recovery funding will spare local taxpayers the cost associated with purchasing these much-needed buses, which play a critical role in the county's transportation system. Many residents in Tompkins County and the surrounding region depend on TCAT's bus fleet to get around the area. Without funding from the federal economic recovery bill these buses wouldn't be able to be purchased now."

TCAT, Inc. General Manager Joe Turcotte said, "The six buses we are replacing are well past their useful life by five to six years and without this stimulus money, we would not have been able to replace them. These six new buses, which are more fuel efficient, cleaner and passenger friendly, will bolster our fleet. In 2009, TCAT broke records with 3.35 million rides and having better buses are key to staying on that upward trend in the years to come. All in all, it's a net gain to our local economy and to our environment."

With the new federal economic recovery funding, TCAT will retire six buses-- three of which are 17 years-old and three of which are 18 years-old. Typically, buses should be replaced after 12 years but funding to do so has not been available. The use of new technology on the six new buses will make them cleaner, quieter, and more fuel efficient.

TCAT is a not-for-profit corporation that provides public transportation for Tompkins County and portions of Tioga and Schuyler counties. TCAT's annual ridership is in excess of 3.35 million covering a distance of more than 1.6 million miles. TCAT also offers complementary ADA Paratransit services called Gadabout.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has already saved or created more than 2 million jobs – rebuilding our infrastructure and economy for global competitiveness. Through the

Recovery Act, 95 percent of working Americans continue to see the benefit of one of the largest tax cuts in history in every paycheck. With Hinchey's support, the House passed the comprehensive Jobs for Main Street Act in December 2009 to make targeted investments in areas that will grow our economy over the long term – including highways, public transit, construction, small businesses, job training, and hiring and retaining teachers, police officers, and firefighters.